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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BASRAH 000152

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/19/2015

TAGS: PREL KDEM IZ

SUBJECT: INFORMAL ELECTION-DAY POLL RESULTS IN THE SOUTH

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REASON: 1.4 (b)

¶11. (C) Summary. During the December 15 election REO Basrah partnered with Al-Manarah newspaper, Radio Shinasheel and the AFAQ Media NGO to conduct informal polling of Iraqi voters in the south. These three organizations conducted election-day polling in all four (4) southern provinces, using the same questionnaire developed collaboratively with the REO. As of December 16, Al-Manarah and AFAQ reported the results of 3,759 responses to the REO. The raw data indicates that 49.19% of voters that responded to the poll said they voted for the 555 list, with 20.54% for 731. The poll also asked about important issues and influences affecting voters' decisions, as well as collecting demographic data. The poll results should be considered anecdotal and viewed only as collected data. End Summary.

¶12. (C) According to a summary of all data collected, 49.19% of poll participants indicated a vote for 555, 20.54% for 731, 18.76% for other parties and 11.51% did not respond to the question. By province the raw data indicated the following:

--Basrah: 555 (48.45%), 731 (22.14%), Other Lists (25.62%), No Answer (3.79%)
--Nasariyah: 555 (59.21%), 731 (18.87%), Other Lists (4.11%), No Answer (17.81%)
--Al-Amarah: 555 (58.98%), 731 (21.53%), Other Lists (13.39%), No Answer (6.10%)
--Al-Samawah: 555 (53.80%), 731 (23.68%), Other Lists (4.39%), No Answer (18.13%)

REO Basrah received polling data from Wasit, Najaf, Diyaniyah, Karbala and Babil, but the sample size was considerably smaller than the four southern provinces as AFAQ and Radio Shinasheel did not conduct polling in south central Iraq. The data were included in overall summary calculations throughout the cable, but are not referenced here.

Security and family/religious values were most important

¶13. (C) 34.88% of all responses indicated that 'security' was the most important issue affecting their own vote, with 33.70% indicating personal/family values. 18.09% of voters indicated that 'comments or statements' by Al-Sistani affected their vote. Security was the most important issue facing all Iraqis during the election, drawing the largest response at 43.41%. When asked the source of political advertising they saw prior to the election, 51.51% responded 'posters', with 29.30% responding 'TV', and only a few indicated newspapers, radio or leaflets. However, only 20.62% said that advertising affected how they voted. Poll participants cited religious values as the most important "personal issue" affecting their vote (35.28%), with their 'own opinions' a close second (31.32%).

¶14. (C) The reported demographics for the combined polling data are as follows:

Age

-- 18-25 730 24.02%
-- 25-35 997 29.37%
-- 35-50 868 26.44%
-- 50-65 333 9.86%
-- Over 65 122 3.73%
-- No Answer 263 6.58%

Gender

-- Male 2115 66.12%
-- Female 864 25.52%
-- No Answer 334 8.36%

Education

-- Primary 793 24.97%
-- Secondary 1104 33.68%
-- College 678 22.52%
-- None 220 11.23%
-- No Answer 304 7.61%

15. (C) Polling organizations reported a number of difficulties in conducting the poll. The security situation required that pollsters pre-position themselves in the respective locations several days prior to the election. Poll workers were unable to canvas the cities that they covered due to transportation restrictions. Poll results had to be called in to media organizations throughout the day, which was problematic due to poor communications infrastructure. As seen in the demographic data, women were reluctant to participate in the poll, and poll workers reported that those who did participate were often in the presence of their husband or father. The proportion of women participating in the poll was far lower than their turnout in the actual election, which undoubtedly affected the poll results. In Babil and Wasit provinces, poll workers reported that participants were very reluctant to indicate their voting decision.

16. (C) Comment. Poll results received from AFAQ and Al-Manarah were consistent with pre-election expectations. The raw data suggests that support for 555 in the outlying provinces of Dhi Qar, Muthanna and Maysan was categorically stronger than in Basrah, due in part to a less affluent, less educated population. Although security concerns were cited by poll participants in most provinces as the primary issue affecting them, personal and religious values played a strong role in voting decisions. End Comment

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